4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

and also, as we shall see, the many unpredictable modes of consumption of the grain (e.g. in recompensing collective labour, *vide infra*).[1]

MEAT AND FISH. Meat (*numit*) is subject to even greater fluctuations of supply than grain owing to uncontrollable sources. Every compound possesses some live stock, if it be only a few fowls and guinea-fowls. A well-to-do compound may have a cow or two, even several cows, or a couple of donkeys, but the ordinary man usually comes into possession of these animals only in the form of bride-wealth, which will as likely as not be used immediately to pay a debt or, more rarely, to make a special and urgent sacrifice. In any case, a cow is never slaughtered specifically for food[2] by the average man. We heard of two donkeys being slaughtered in order to sell the meat by a couple of young men out for profit. This was vigorously denounced by the Chief, and was not repeated. As a rule beef is obtained from sacrifices to the ancestor spirits, always made by men of senior status, and from animals offered during funeral ceremonies, donkey-meat only from the latter offerings. The carcase is usually divided up among a large number of people in accordance with kinship status. An elder may obtain a whole leg of a bull, but he will sub-divide it among the compounds or households subordinate to him. Thus, in the long run, the share of a single household comes to a very small quantity, often only a few ounces. But nothing is wasted; the whole carcase, including all the viscera, is consumed.

Sheep and goats are owned by all but the poorest; but again, no one would wantonly slaughter an animal for food. In addition to sacrifices and funerals, there is a number of formal occasions on which one of these animals must be killed, e.g. as an act of hospitality to a mother-in-law or a very great friend. Corresponding to their lesser value and much greater abundance, sheep and goats are sacrificed in larger numbers than cows, often by men of junior status. The

[1] Mr. Lynn, *op. cit.* finds that 1 man supports 3·7 people on the average, on 2·03 acres of farmed land. In addition to the sources of error mentioned in the text, it should be noted that the simplicity of Tale agricultural technology makes it possible for quite small boys to be of occasional, if somewhat casual, assistance in the fields.

[2] The Chief of Tongo slaughtered a cow for his wives and elders at the New Year (*Daa*) Festival in 1934, the only case of the kind we came across.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

262 individual cannot be discussed here. Where necessary reference will be made to them later, in so far as they influence the consumption of protein foods.

262 For the most part, however, the meat which forms an indispensable ingredient of every well-cooked meal, is that of the guinea-fowl. The 235 domestic fowl which is kept as universally as the guinea-fowl, can- 422 not replace the latter since all women eschew it and all first-born children in some clans taboo it. Every compound has its chickens and guinea-fowls. Every man keeps his own; women often do so too; boys begin to breed poultry before they can use a hoe. For poultry, say the Tallensi, is the beginning of wealth. A chicken may be the cause of a quarrel between householders, in which long-standing friction comes to a head, and which leads to households breaking away from the larger unit. In the ownership of poultry, therefore, the tendencies towards the differentiation of households and individuals within the unit of food economy come to marked expression. An individual, even a small boy, can dispose of his poultry [231] freely; the owner of a sheep or a goat, if he is a junior member of a self-supporting unit, would have to inform the head of his unit before selling it, though the proceeds are his own; and all cattle, though nominally owned absolutely by the head of the joint family, can be disposed of only by the common consent of the senior members of that group. Thus the guinea-fowls which find their way into the cooking-pot are obtained not from the head of the unit of food economy, but by each housewife from her husband or by her own efforts. Guinea-fowls are slaughtered specifically for the pot, fowls [782 never. Both kinds of birds are the commonest sacrificial animals, and 431] a guinea-fowl the commonest gift to a woman. Hence the number of birds one sees at a compound is no criterion of the amount of poultry-meat consumed there—the less so as the Tallensi are reluctant to sacrifice their own birds, but prefer to purchase birds for this purpose.[1]

262 The Tallensi are not particularly discriminating in their choice of meat. Domestic animals dying of disease are eaten to the last shred. At the height of the ritual season cows are often slaughtered and left to lie in the broiling sun for two days before time is found to skin them.

[435] [1] Guinea-fowls sell at 1½*d.* to 6*d.*, chickens at 1*d.* to 9*d.* (depending upon size and the season).

7:Lynn G-5 (1932-1936) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

The Animal

Health Department have done much good by castrating scrub bulls, but unfortunately the farmers themselves have carried the matter further, to a dangerous degree, by castrating many of the remaining bulls in order to sell them to itinerant butchers' agents. This trade has developed rapidly during recent years and the services of any bull at all, let alone a good bull, are not always readily obtainable. The difficulty is that the cattle are owned one or two head at a time and rarely in herds, and a farmer who wants money, and has a bull he can sell to obtain it, does not see why he should keep a bull to serve his neighbours' cows, and is prepared to risk his own cow, or cows, not finding a mate. The supply of bulls is a matter receiving the attention of the Animal Health Department, through the Native Administrations.

Tending of Livestock.

The farmers' attitude to livestock is typified by the fact that herding is the responsibility of small boys. The stock are housed at night in an open compartment within the compound. No bedding is supplied and the unbeaten floor of the standing is only irregularly cleaned out; the result is a very unhealthy mess in the rains. Except to save groundnut and cowpea hay for feeding to horses and donkeys, no provision is made for dry season fodder. The stock are turned out to browse where they will over the stubble and upon recognised grazing grounds between farms; but since these are generally burnt over, the fodder supply is sparse in quantity and poor in quality, and all stock show considerable loss of condition as the dry season advances, particularly in years when rains are late. The supply of water also presents a problem in many areas. In the rains, sheep and goats are generally tethered to short stakes along farm boundaries, and cattle are herded on the grazing grounds.

Fowls.

Of all classes of livestock probably fowls receive most attention. They are able to pick up a fair living by gleaning around threshing floors, and the protein constituent of their diet is obtained largely from white ants. These are collected with cowdung placed in an old pot inverted over an ant run in the soil. There is scarcely a single compound in North Mamprusi that does not engage in the export trade in fowls to Kumasi. In the dry season a man will collect together about twenty-five fowls at a time and head-load them in a long crate to some market on the road, usually Bolgatanga, or Savelugu, and either sell them to a middleman there, or join a lorry and sell them in Kumasi. With the proceeds from the sale of fowls, it is common to purchase grain in Dagomba or South Mamprusi, to re-sell in Navrongo or Zuarungu Area, and thus to show a profit upon both the journey down, and the journey up.